



General Assembly
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First Committee

General Debate

Statement by Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden
Delivered by H.E. Ambassador Tore Hattrem
Permanent Representative, Norway

Mr Chair,

I have the privilege to speak on behalf of the Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden, and my own country, Norway.

We welcome the Secretary-General's Agenda for Disarmament, with its aim of putting disarmament and non-proliferation at the centre of the work of the United Nations.

We join the Secretary-General's call for all states to work together to achieve concrete, verifiable and irreversible steps to prepare for a world without nuclear weapons.

Preparing for a successful 2020 NPT Review Conference is an overarching priority.

The treaty has proven resilient and effective. The global stockpile of nuclear weapons has been substantially reduced, the proliferation of nuclear weapons has been curtailed, and the benefits of civilian nuclear energy and technology have been shared globally.

(Check against delivery)

Still, we face serious challenges from a disarmament as well as from a non-proliferation perspective.

The DPRK's nuclear weapons programme remains an unacceptable violation of international law and NPT obligations, despite promising diplomatic efforts. The Nordic countries stand firmly behind the relevant UN Security Council resolutions on this issue.

The Nordic countries are committed to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and support its continued implementation. It is the best way of ensuring that Iran does not develop nuclear weapons. Therefore, we deeply regret the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA, which has made the agreement vulnerable. We call on Iran to continue its ongoing full cooperation with the IAEA.

Failure to address these complex challenges could seriously undermine the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime.

Mr Chair,

The continued implementation of New START is crucial. We encourage the US and Russia to extend New START, and to resolve the serious concerns about Russia's compliance with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty through diplomatic measures.

We call for continued global commitment to the NPT and the commitments undertaken at review conferences, including those related to Article VI. A forward-looking agenda for the 2020 review covering all three pillars of the NPT is needed. This should include:

- Strengthening the global norm against nuclear testing by the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.
- Developing an effectively verifiable treaty that bans the production of fissile material.
- Developing credible multilateral solutions to verify future nuclear disarmament.
- Measures to reduce the risk of accidental use of nuclear weapons.
- Confidence building measures, including enhanced transparency by nuclear weapons states.
- Strengthened negative security assurances to non-nuclear weapons states.
- Addressing the issue of non-strategic nuclear weapons.
- Working towards universal acceptance of the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and its Additional Protocol as the global safeguards standard.
- Making the most of peaceful applications of nuclear technologies to assist efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr Chair,

It is deeply disturbing that more than 20 years after the Chemical Weapons Convention entered into force, we are still witnessing the use of chemical weapons – in Syria and Iraq, in Malaysia and in the UK. As reported by the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism, the Syrian regime is responsible for the repeated use of chemical weapons, and ISIL has carried out at least two such attacks.

The Nordic countries condemn all use of chemical weapons. Those responsible must be held to account. The decisions taken at the Special Conference of States Parties in June on attribution are an important step forward. We fully support the OPCW's implementation of these decisions.

The Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention is another vital pillar of the global disarmament architecture. The universality of the Convention is essential. At the upcoming Meeting of States Parties we must endeavour to improve response and preparedness, address relevant developments in life sciences, and tackle emerging challenges.

The Nordic countries are firmly committed to the peaceful use and sustainable development of outer space. International cooperation is essential and the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space is the key international organisation in this regard.

We are also concerned about the increase of serious cyberattacks on civilian infrastructure. We seek to preserve an open, secure, robust and free cyberspace. We all agree that international law applies in cyberspace; now we must focus on its implementation.

Mr Chair,

The Nordic countries will make a joint statement in the thematic debate on conventional weapons, and will therefore limit our comments here to the following:

- We welcome the ongoing substantive discussions on new and rapidly evolving technologies, including lethal autonomous weapons systems.
- We firmly support the Arms Trade Treaty, and are pleased to see that it continues to gain ground.

- The UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons has made important contributions to security. We welcome the German initiative on addressing conventional ammunition in surplus.
- The Mine Ban Treaty and the Convention on Cluster Munitions have established humanitarian norms that extend well beyond the states parties to these instruments.

Mr Chair,

We underline the importance of including a gender perspective in all arms control efforts.

Finally,

We are concerned about the challenging financial situation facing several conventions and their support services. We urge all states parties to pay their dues on time, in full, and without conditions.

Thank you, Mr Chair.